





"EXOTIQUE"

. . . . dedicated to FASHIONS,
FADS and FANCIES

No. 31.

CONTENTS:

"Lovely Lady in Leather" Pg. 7
Fiction by E. Welles

"The Boots that Talked" 29
Fiction by B. Hayle

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LOVELY LADY IN LEATHER

by

Emmet Welles

I had worked quite late at the office, so it must have been after eleven when I stopped into the tiny cellar cafe for a drink on my way home. There was only one person at the bar, and I shall remember that first thrilling sight of her as long as I live.

The instant I saw her, sitting there casually sipping a cocktail, seemingly lost in her thoughts, I surrendered myself to her. She must have sensed my rapt stare, for she turned slightly on the stool, the leather of her black capeskin breeches creaking almost inaudibly. Her eyes met mine, her look became a knowing one, and then her handsome,



BIZARRE

pale face relaxed into a soft, warm smile.

She was a vision in a sheath of rich, black leather.

She ran her hand, tightly gloved in black kidskin, through her thick, lustrously dark hair which nestled around her neck in loose curls. The movement sent shimmers across her high-necked leather blouse, and the light glinted like a passionate plea along the rippling leather of her wrist-length sleeve. From a heavy gold chain around her neck hung a large brass key, accenting the swell of her leather-covered bosom.

She knew. I could tell by the tone of her voice when she asked, "Would you like to buy me a drink?" There was the hint of possessive amusement in her slightly husky voice. Her smile broadened, exposing beautiful, even white teeth.

"May I?" I answered, obediently.

I sensed what was coming. I was about to be possessed, to lose myself to this strange, wonderful creature. I welcomed it, with fear

FADS AND FASHIONS

and longing. Already my mind was racing so fast I had little control over my own thinking.

I ordered two cocktails. The bartender seemed unaware of her. Evidently, this exotic woman was not a stranger to this place.

I closed the ten feet of space between us, and then I was standing next to her. Her legs were crossed. I noticed she wore black leather sandals, obviously hand-made of the finest, softest leather.

With her slightest movement, her leather pants made the tantalizing sound that only tight fitting capeskin can make. Her tightly-clad legs crossed, the leather pressing and moving against leather with the most imperceptible shiftings of her body, the delightful sound becoming a natural part of being near her. The exciting smell of her leather filled my nostrils, creating wild wonderings and wishes within me.

"I've never seen you in here before," she said.

"This is my first time." Standing next

BIZARRE

to her, I felt suspended in a blissful agony of desire--to feel her soft leather against me.

"I come in quite often," she said. "It's a restful place, never crowded." She idly caressed her leather garbed arm with her gloved hand.

There was a pause, and she uncrossed her legs, then crossed them the other way. The sound of her movements was a rhapsody. I thought I detected a harder creaking--my ears were alive with interest--and I knew she must be wearing a corset. It would be leather, most likely.

"Would you help me take off my gloves she asked, looking directly into my eyes, deeply it seemed, into the very core of my being. "I like to wear them tight, but now I think I'd like to remove them. I'm a woman of whims."

She held out her hand to me. It was a small hand, and the tautly stretched glove leather gave off a sheen in the half light of the room.

I thought my hands would tremble as I reached for her hand. But they didn't. As I

FADS AND FASHIONS

made this first move to touch this woman who was to be the answer to my most ecstatic dreams, I felt marvelously relaxed, liberated from a constraining frustration. As I slipped the glove from her hand I thought to myself, "Now, at last, I will be able to express my soul's longings."

Her hands were extremely soft and smooth.

"You have lovely hands," I said.

"Perhaps because they are gloved most of the time, and have been since I was. . .well, since I first realized that leather had a mystical influence on me."

"Do you live in this neighborhood?" I asked.

"Yes, just down the street. I have an apartment. And you?"

"About ten blocks from here. This is my subway stop. Funny, in all the years I've been coming by here, I've never noticed you."

BIZARRE

She caught the full meaning of my remark.

"Because of my rather unusual taste for clothes, I seldom go out until after dark. It's not that I feel conspicuous or uncomfortable because of the attention I would attract. Actually, I feel wonderful dressed as I am. It's just that I have a rather good job as a private secretary, and if I met someone from the office they might not understand."

She smiled. The heady scent of her leathers and the leather-inspired sounds were intoxicating my senses.

"I understand," I assured her, although I knew there was no need to say this to her, since she knew. "I think your costume is... extremely attractive. I might say, exciting."

"Mmmmm. I thought you would appreciate it. I can tell, somehow, I could tell the second I looked at you."

"I knew you could."

"I feel that when I wear leather, the more

FADS AND FASHIONS

completely covered I am by leather, black and soft, I feel strangely exhilarated and alive, as though I were a different and better person. I feel free."

"I know exactly what you mean," I said. "When I see someone like you so beautifully dressed--enfolded--in leather, I feel different, as though I were with a person from a different and better world. I feel drawn to you by a gentle, but compelling force."

She sipped her drink. "Do you have--wear--any leather clothing?"

"I have leather pants and a jacket, and a few leather helmets. But living in an apartment, I couldn't wear them out. My neighbors might not understand."

"Well, my place is on the first floor of an old brownstone, and in this particular neck of the woods, no one bothers to wonder about anyone else. It's one of the reasons I live there."

"It's so much more enjoyable with someone who understands. It heightens the



FADS AND FASHIONS

the feeling of rebirth that leather always gives me."

She glanced at the clock behind the bar, as though suddenly reminded to check the hour.

"We could have a drink in my place," she said, "if you'd care to, if you're not due home."

"I'm a bachelor," I said. "I'm never due home."

She began to don her gloves as I finished my drink. Then she looked into my eyes again. Whether they were searching or discovering I couldn't tell.

She walked--a bit stiffly--to the corner of the room where I saw she had hung up a thigh length leather coat, also black. She slipped it on, and pulled its hood up over her head.

As she came back to the bar, I noticed the slightest wince of pain on her lips, although the general expression of her face was

BIZARRE

one of sublime satisfaction, almost of triumph.

As we walked toward the door, she remarked: "You've probably noticed that I'm wearing a corset. I'm afraid I made it a bit too tight tonight. When I left the house, it seemed just right--wonderfully tight and confining. But it's getting too much for me now."

As we passed through the door, she withdrew her arm from mine, and reached into her pocket.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

What she brought out answered my question.

It was a black kidskin mask that would cover her entire face, from under her chin to the top of her glistening white forehead. It strapped around her head and neck and mouth and buckled behind her head.

FADS AND FASHIONS

"I have many of these," she said. "One to fit every mood." Then she added, "Besides the fact that it prevents any accidental recognition, I like wearing it. Would you please," she asked, holding up the mask.

It was petal soft kidskin on both sides, with two small holes for her eyes.

"I guess we might as well start now," she smiled, and pushed the hood from her head.

"Someone might think I'm trying to gag a lady," I said, half jokingly.

"I don't care what anyone thinks," she snarled unexpectedly. Her voice was low, throaty and tense. "Put it on!" she snapped.

Evidently she had already begun anticipating the pleasure of the mask shaping the contours of her face, the pleasure of the leather pressed against her lips and crushing them, the smell of the leather permeating her sense of smell.

She clasped it over her face and turned her back to me.

BIZARRE

"The buckles," she said, urgently.

I wrapped the top leather strap around her head. Her hair was fine and silky from many brushings. I buckled the strap and repeated the action with each of the other straps.

"Tighter!" she snapped. "Tighter!" Her words were muffled by the mask's pressure.

As I was undoing a strap, she spoke again, but more calmly, though still in muffled tones.

"Before you begin," she said, "Let me explain that I sometimes get impatient. I hope you don't mind."

"It's quite all right," I said, and began tightening the straps.

She grunted.

I pulled as hard as I could, but her head kept turning as I yanked, giving with the force of the pull. She grabbed for my hand--she could no longer speak outside of a groan

FADS AND FASHIONS

as the leather hit into her face--and placed my hand squarely over her face. She clearly wanted me to hold her head steady so the tightening of the straps would be effective.

Holding her face firmly, my hand pressing the deliciously soft glove leather of her mask into her face, I pulled at the strap as hard as I could, then buckled it. I repeated this with each strap. When I finished, she sighed weakly.

Satisfied at last that the mask was right, she lifted the hood of the leather coat, took my arm and clung to it as we started up the steps.

We walked the half block to her apartment very slowly. She seemed a bit faint, and held my arm closely. The night was chilly, but, to say the least, my lady was well shielded from the elements.

Her apartment was three large rooms--a bedroom, living room and kitchen. It was furnished in excellent taste, though not in the modern style. She lived alone.

BIZARRE

Inside, she took off the jacket, but not the mask. She pointed toward a closet, motioning me to hang up the jacket and my own coat.

I knew she would have other leathers, but I was not prepared for what greeted my eyes in the closet. The closet was a very large one, and in it were three rows of leather coats, dresses, sheaths, and heaven knows what else. I noticed a leather blanket which, like the mask, was leather on both sides.

When I turned back to the room, she was reclining on the couch. Her eyes were not on me, but were staring at nothing. She was enraptured.

Then she motioned to me to sit next to her. I did, and she took my hand and pressed it over her masked face. I applied a slight pressure, trying to find out what she wanted.

Her bosom, large and full under the black leather blouse, was rising and falling.

When I pressed, she seemed to grow *

FADS AND FASHIONS

bit limper. Her corset creaked, and her breast rose high in a sigh.

Her face was wonderfully reposed, although she seemed a bit drained. "Shall we have our drink?" she said panting.

"Whatever you wish," I said.

"All right. But first let me slip into something more comfortable. Maybe you'd like to do the same. I have a few outfits which I bought--had made--you might say in anticipation of any possibilities." She laughed.

I noticed for the first time what a big woman she was, easily 5 feet ten, but perfectly proportioned, and lithe and graceful. She walked with a dancer's poise.

She went to her closet, rustled some things, and reappeared with a full length black leather suit, like a coverall, that slipped up the back, and could be belted to different sizes.

BIZARRE

I noticed there were zipper attachments for a hood. Wonderfully, it was also leather lined, with the softest glove leather. With the suit over her arm, she went over to the window air conditioner. The air conditioner was overly large for the size of the room, but I knew why. Toggled in leather, the temperature had to be suitably controlled.

"Here, slip into this. The bathroom is just by the kitchen."

I took off all my clothes and put on the suit. Never have I felt such wonderful leather. I looked at myself in the mirror. The image I saw delighted me. I was in leather from my neck to my ankles; black, dully lustrous, petal soft capeskin. I found myself thinking of the hood. And I would need slippers, or hoots.

When I went back to the living room, she was standing in the middle of the room waiting for me. She wore the same kind of a suit as I had on.

"Oh dear," she said when she saw me. I forgot boots and gloves. I won't have any



BIZARRE

half dressed gentlemen in my house," she laughed. "You can make us a drink while I'm getting them. The liquor's by the television."

While I mixed a cocktail, she went to the closet. Luckily, she had my size in both gloves and boots. As soon as I finished the drink making chore, I put them on. At last, I felt complete.

We sipped our drinks in silence. I knew that she was probably doing the same as I, wallowing in the pleasure of our attire, while thinking creatively how to heighten the ecstasies of our relationship which had begun so wonderfully.

"You look so wonderful and peaceful sitting there," she said fondly. "My prince charming."

I laughed. "I feel wonderful. Thanks to you. How can you afford so many exciting clothes on a secretary's salary?"

"Oh, I have an annuity that my father left me. That more than takes care of my

FADS AND FASHIONS

clothing expenses."

"You're lucky."

"Would you care for another drink," she said, and then, looking deeply into me again, added, "Or would you rather have your hood?"

I was vaguely aware of my pulse beginning to race. "The hood," I said, and put down the glass.

She went to the closet again, and came out carrying two black leather articles, our hoods. Her face was expressionless, almost ascetic looking, exalted by the contemplation of intense passion to come. . . .

THE END



"THE BOOTS THAT TALKED"

by B. Hayle

The conversation had gone along very pleasantly, talking of this and that - mainly that, of course. Each boot had its own opinions and held firm convictions about its own powers of persuasion or compelling directions. They were all, however, of one accord over one thing, and that was that, no matter who the wearer was she, or he, had to go the way the boot willed. There was amongst the assembled company, though, one who was not a boot but a patent leather shoe, the smallest of them all yet in the final event, the winner!

The one holding court at the moment of



BIZARER

our tuning in was a knee length boot in buttoned patent leather. Very bold; very brash; very commanding and dominating.

"I can't understand," she was saying "how any of you can possibly argue the point, I mean there's absolutely nothing which any of you can bring up to refute my point. When I walk into a room the whole place lights up. Can any of you deny that every eye is turned towards me the second I enter? I shine; I twinkle; I reflect the lights in a thousand different ways: each of my buttons catches and reflects the light in different directions and each of the onlookers imagines that it is to she, or he that my buttons are turned. Then my ankle creases: they're just about the shiniest and most succulent wrinkles of the lot. Why you," turning to Miss Patent Leather Shoe, "What can you show in the way of an ankle wrinkle?"

"What indeed!" replied Miss Patent. "I have, it is true, a little stretch of tautened leather which runs along the edge of my shoe between the stiffening and the edge but that can't be compared to your wrinkled ankle - or

FADS AND FANCIES

can it? Maybe you'd better refer that question to a few thousand men and women who have fallen for my patent dimple."

And here she very neatly and concisely laid the challenge baton down. The buttoned one paused, then continued:

"Yes - yes - you may have something there, my dear," she conceded. "I can't really tell. You are attractive, no one will deny that. But," she continued, "I will defy any boot or shoe in the room to do better than I when my buttons are in. When once I have sunk my buttons into my victim's flesh then I never let go. I grip and grip with each rising button until, by the time my top button has slid through its hole, my victim, be it man or woman is a gonner. There may be a few vain thrashing of his or her, legs, but to what avail? I've got my victim and by hugging closely to him (or her) I know full well that within a matter of seconds be or she will begin to weaken, and then it is only a second or two before the collapse takes place and the captor is being beseeched to take possession. Oh! Believe me, I hug my legs with joy to think what I have caused.

BIZARRE

She looked round the magic circle in her triumph.

"Well," she said. "Who's next?" Surely I have some competition?"

"I don't know about competition," said a smooth voiced brown kid button boot. "In fact, I don't think it is competition at all. But if you want to know how I work then all I can say is that my methods are completely at variance with yours. True I button up my victim, but in a completely different manner. I am shewn to him or her when the choice is to be made, maybe against very stiff opposition, such as thigh boots, laced or buttoned or a variety of shoes. Maybe the subtle Russian Boot," and here she bowed to that quiet but dangerous slayer of morals, "but when I am chosen I smooth myself over each button goes scarcely unnoticed until it is firmly in its hole and by that time I have crept up one higher. In fact, I take great joy in just sliding up the leg until the last button has been fastened. At the completion of the leathered buttoning my victim seldom seems to be aware of the fact as it has all been so quiet and genteel. Nevertheless the effect is the same as yours, let

FADS AND FASHIONS

me tell you." This to the strident Patent Boot. "My patient usually just slithers under my power and without any struggle or fight surrenders his or her body. It is all most satisfying. MOST Satisfying."

"VERY interesting. All most very interesting," said the Black Kid Thigh Boot, "but I deal with a different type entirely. From the very outset I set out to thoroughly demoralise my victim. I am shewn to him - or her, as you said, and from that moment they are my slave. They can't be booted too quickly to satisfy them. There is so much of me to be arranged though. You can't just get into me. I have to be arranged: my feet have to be laid out with the backs of me opened out with the laces straightened. If you don't get those right then I shall play hell with the would-be willing party. But from the moment that my male or female victim steps inside me I am the victor. I tolerate no side stepping or wishing to withdraw. From the very first lacehole I grip my victim with a laced and leathered hold from which there is no escape. At each stage I go tighter and tighter. I grip my laces and purposely tighten up until they gasp with pain. And do you know what hap-

pens then? I'll tell you: I grip even tighter. Over the calf I go, up to the knee, up to the thigh. I am no respecter of the soft white flesh. I dig deep into it. The silken stocking and the white flesh mean nothing to me. I bite deep into either. Do you know, once, when I was tightening onto a shin bone, a bubble of air formed underneath my tongue. I purposely kept it there and what happened? My booted wearer moaned that the lacing was tight. The laces crept round and up and above it. Eventually a pin had to be pushed into my bulging tongue and as the air whooshed out, do you know what happened? Well you can guess. I had got her so completely in my grasp that she gave herself at the same moment."

The Black Kid Thigh Boot thought for a moment and then said:

"I'll tell you something. I'll bring a boxing maxim up to-date."

"The Higher They're Laced, The Harder They Fall."

"Yes," said the Russian Boot, "maybe

you're right." Her voice was warm and "Brown." She was warm and brown, too. "No doubt you're right. No doubt about it whatsoever, but we must get our victims in the manner best suited to our personalities. Now take me, for instance (and how many people, both male and female have taken me). I have a soft, supple personality, I am warm and friendly to look at, I am soft to the touch and delightful to the tongue and my leathery aroma when placed near to the nose is so soft yet insinuating that I have never met any victim who did not take me just an inch nearer "to see what it was like." The second my leather touches their face or I am placed gently around their nose and they are told to breathe deeply then my hooded, leathery, creasy victory is won. They seem to become different people altogether. They slide on to the floor or bed and offer their legs without the slightest resistance. Very often, in fact, they ask that they might kiss and caress, "the other one" until it is time for the other leg to be Russian booted. Oh, my dears, and here she squeaked her wrinkled ankles around each other in lovely sexy remembrance of past victims, "If you did but know the numbers of people I've seduced! And such "respectable" ones, some of them. But then I'm lucky. I have a mistress who is simply smashingly beautiful and who had been a hoot and

and shoe lover from her early school days. She also is lucky inasmuch that she belongs to an extremely wealthy family and who all behave (except her) with old fashioned propriety and style. They each have a maid and their own quarters are sacrosanct. No one would so much as dream of going to someone else's cupboards or drawers. This leaved my mistress with every chance to fill her drawers with everything she wishes, with the certain knowledge that no prying eyes will go peeping in. Drawers, did I say? I mean cupboards, cupboards, cupboards and more cupboards, all built in to the wall, and each one filled with nothing but hoots and shoes of every description. It is quite fantastic to see. Sometimes, when she had been suitably garbed by her maid in the leather outfit for that particular desire she will have a couch made of nothing but shoes and boots and her maid has to make a "waterfall" of boots and shoes which are poured all over her until she is completely covered by them. Sometimes, though, when only her shoulders and head are left exposed she will reach up to her maid's waist and drag her under the leathery pile and what goes on then is a sin and a shame and shouldn't happen to any poor maid. But happen it does, and these days, or

nights, let me tell you, there is only a modicum of resistance, if resistance it can be called at all. As she goes under the surface there is a small, frightened squeal which is quickly drowned by the leather "sea." The squeals continue. Oh, yes. They continue but they are of a different nature entirely. They are heaving, beseeching squeals and there is much movement beneath the piles and piles of hoots and shoes."

"It may perhaps interest you to know how my mistress became the mistress of her maid. Would it?"

There were murmurs of assent from all present. Experienced though they all were with booted lore they were ever eager to hear of the entry of yet one more into their booted ranks.

"Well," began the Russian boot, wrinkling with pleasure at the interest displayed. "It happened like this. I told you that my mistress belonged to a wealthy family and that all their belongings were private from each other, also that they all had their own maid. Now the interest my mistress had in hoots and shoes was so great that she would polish every pair every

BIZARRE

single day. As she acquired and kept acquiring so many, most of her day was spent in solitary seclusion and, agreeable as her pastime was it became obvious that somehow she would have to take a partner in to help her keep up this pleasant chore. She searched around in her mind for someone who would take the same, keen interest, and although there were any amount of friends whom she had seduced into her way of thinking and behaving it was quite obvious that they couldn't travel miles each day to do her bidding, so she thought, and thought hard.

Of course, the solution - if it worked - was so obvious and simple that it must have been staring her in the face from the moment when she had first started overloading her shelves with footwear.

Her maid! Her very own maid; her private maid who owed allegiance to no one but herself. She was the type too! She was trim and pert with one of those beautiful tip-tilted noses and vibrantly alive. As she walked her body seemed to levitate itself through the air as though there were no weight resting on her high heels at all. Even down to her shoes she

FADS AND FASHIONS

was right - did I say "even"? I apologize I should have said "starting from her shoes", for these were invariably of shining patent leather: patent leather court shoes; her stockings also were of the finest black nylon, and her uniform - self chosen - was a trim, short skirted, slightly flared around the hem, shiny black creation and around her waist, or rather hanging from the waist was a tiny, silly little lacey apron thing. Her neckline while not being too low was cut into a deep square, and from her waist hung two silly little lengths of black silk with a V cut into the ends of both. On her blonde hair, at one side of her head was a little round "lacy bit" as a foil to her apron. She was a sight to make anyone gasp with admiration. Many a time my mistress had wondered why she had not taken up an easier and more lucrative life. It would have been so easy for her and yet she seemed so satisfied to serve my mistress. As the possible solution occurred to my mistress she could have kicked herself, though not in my boots I trust! On some trivial pretext she rang for her maid and when she had appeared and been given some task to keep her in the bedroom my mistress began traveling over her. Yes. Surely! She couldn't be mistaken; the tight uplift of her bras-

BIZARRE

siers which sent her breasts upward bulging, the sleek black costume, the gossamer stockings of black, and above all - or once again should I correct myself and say 'beneath all'? Those delicate courts with high-stilt heels in gleaming black patent. Her little retrousse nose and abounding vitality. Surely it all added up.

"Marie," my mistress purred, "why do you always wear high heeled patent leather pumps? Is there something significant behind it?"

"Significant?" repeated Marie, with eyes wide open; her pretty mouth also half-opened in query, "why, what could there be significant in wearing high heeled patent leather pumps?" She rested the nail of her right forefinger and lightly tested it between her rows of shimmering teeth, meanwhile letting her eyes run down my mistress's body until they came to rest on her five inch brown kid pumps. This was a different relationship, never before had she looked at my mistress so. She raised her eyes again and smiled, then took her finger out of her mouth. "Doesn't Madam like my wearing

FADS AND FASHIONS

high heeled shoes in patent leather?"

My mistress pondered: Was there something behind this conversation, was Marie fully conversant with shoes and boots? - She knew so little about her really!

"On the contrary, Marie. I delight in seeing you about my rooms dressed as you are. I was just wondering whether you would like to take a keener interest in shoes altogether."

"Such as?" queried Marie.

"Well," said my mistress, "have you ever wondered what all these built-in cupboards contained? You've been in my employ a long time now yet I've never known you to show any curiosity in anything which didn't officially concern you."

"Madame," said Marie, "I am very happy with you, more happy than you have any idea. If in those cupboards there are things which you didn't want me to see then I just didn't want to see them - if you now want to show me what

BIZARRE

they contain I have an idea that I shall be very happy to admire them in a suitable manner."

The interview was going swimmingly and out of all the verbal fencing between my mistress and her maid was emerging an understanding full of possibilities.

"In a suitable manner?" echoes my mistress. "That sounds very promising, Marie." To which Marie replied, "And I promise to admire them in a suitable manner, Madame."

Their eyes held each other. Neither of them moved until my mistress then said, "Very well then. We'll now see if we are both talking about the same thing."

Whereupon my mistress went to a concealed switch at whose touch all the doors of the cupboards glided open revealing glimmering, shimmering shoes of every description, but all with high heels. In the center cupboard, in the place of honor so to speak, was I, shining and brown and warm and enticing. Marie walked along looking in at each cupboard but time and again she came back to me.

FADS AND FASHIONS

She turned to my mistress and said, "These are glorious boots, Madame. May I take them down?"

"By all means," said my mistress. "Admire them in a suitable manner."

Marie drew me off the shelf and ran her lips along my smooth, soft sides; she ran her lips over my high heels and smelt me deeply.

"Is that in a suitable manner, Madame?" she pertly asked.

"In a very suitable manner," replied my mistress. "Perhaps you would now like to try the boots on?"

"Nothing would suit me more, Madame," replied Marie. "May I sit down and draw them on?"

"By all means" said my mistress. "In fact, I'll help you."

Marie took off her shining patents and

BIZARRE

wrinkled her toes. She twinkled at my mistress and said, "I just can't wait."

"You don't have to," replied my mistress.

My mistress slowly and gently drew me up over Marie's feet. It wasn't quite so easy; her foot found difficulty in slipping into me, but once round the ankle I slipped up along her leg. First one boot then the other. Marie sat there with great satisfaction. She wrinkled her boots one against the other, then looked up. "You know, Madame, I could wear these Russian boots for ever and a day. They do thing to me. If you'll let me wear these boots I'll clean and polish every pair of shoes in those cupboards. I mean it Madame. I'll clean them every day for you."

"No," said my mistress. "We'll both clean them and polish them. It will be our secret."

"And from that day on," said the Russian boot, never was such happiness seen between two women. When they weren't polishing shoes or boots, then they were exchanging them and trying

FADS AND FASHIONS

them on each other's feet. Marie declared that never in her life had she known such happiness as when she was encased in Russian boots. She said that she "came alive" the instant the leather closed over her legs. My mistress, on the contrary said that black patent shoes were her "natural," and insisted on Marie trying on several pairs "just to see." But no matter what shoes her feet were encased in invariably Marie would say "and now I want to be Russian booted, please, Madame." Then the minute they were on she simply burst forth in life and happiness. She would seat my mistress on a divan and garb her feet in one shoe after another, breathing on each one and fondly polishing until they shone like the sun."

"The two of them became quite inseparable and all-in-all to each other. They neither sought for, nor desired the company of others. I used to cling to the legs of Marie to bring her that wild happiness which she experienced when she was wearing me. I think that I was really responsible for her enjoying the waterfall of shoes so much. Sometimes when she was wearing me she would glide her legs round her mistress, up and down her stocking legs and say,

"You know, you couldn't do without me COULD you?" And she would trap her mistress's feet and my wrinkles would have full play. Very often my mistress would wear me and then Marie would revert to her high heeled patent leather shoes and would fondle me all over finding me all the more attractive for being worn by our mutual mistress. She would kiss and fondle each ankle wrinkle saying, "you're such lovely things; so smooth and subtle, and you smell so divine. I don't know what it is that you do to me but I just adore you." My mistress would pirouette her foot around on my high heel and I would wrinkle all over again until poor Marie was fairly distraught and would have to start kissing and fondling me all over again."

"I think that I may take full credit for that beautiful friendship," wrinkled the Russian Boot.

"I enjoyed that story," said pert Miss Patent Leather Court Shoe. "I enjoyed it very much indeed, and if I may say so it was very well recounted but after all we have come to expect that from one so worldly wise and developed in the arts of all things leather. But I

would like to point out to you all that you are, without exception all very self satisfied and somewhat smug. You all tell of conquests made and victories won. But don't forget that I cover more feet than any hoot here. Don't forget that your victories are won behind locked doors whereas I go everywhere in the buses, the trains, the trams, the hotels, restaurants. In fact, wherever women are gathered together there you will find me and never, not once will you ever hear a breath of scandal against me no matter on which class of person I find myself. Now then, isn't that true?"

That this was true was only too obvious, but the Thigh Lace Boot thought up an answer to this one.

"Yes," she said, "that is all very true, but just let me tell you this, which boot, may I ask, would want to belong to the common herd with the crowd instinct? Personally I should just hate it. And don't forget this, that anyone of us could wrap you up in our folds - and then where would you be?"

"That is very true," replied Miss Patent.

"But you can't wrap truth up, and what I mean by that is that people who like us just cannot fake anything. If they are gripped in your holds, or in my neat, shiny surfaces and high heels then they just have to give way to our blandishments. They can't pretend that they are perfectly unmoved if the liking of shoes and boots exists within them. They have no choice other than to be perfectly truthful. In fact, I think that we bring out the truth in men and women more successfully than anyone or anything else. Can you imagine Marie for instance, wearing Russian boots and pretending that they didn't mean a thing to her, why it's absolutely unthinkable. More especially should someone walk in to her boudoir wearing, say, thigh button boots. In ten seconds they would have just fused together. I'd just love to see two leather-lovers coming together and both pretending that it all meant nothing!"

"Anyway. We are all very attractive, don't you think? And no one is really proof against us."

"But don't forget what I have just said, that I, really reign supreme. Why it was only the other year, if that, the Queen or Princess Elisa"

beth as she then was started a mode of shoe which is up to date even today. I am referring to the court shoe made in various leathers with a high ankle strap. There were photographs in all the daily papers and weekly papers in the world. I reigned really supreme. Now I think you'll give me that point will you not, all of you?

Everybody had to agree that this was so and being all of one family and one fraternity they gracefully conceded that, though she was the smallest of them all she wreaked the greatest amount of damage among men and women. But to save boot face the knee length button boot (being of the same skin, so to speak) said, "while we all agree that you are, by common consent the most beautiful in the world don't forget this about all of us. Among those who like beautiful things, we, that is all of us, reign supreme. No matter which part of the world, there are people who are but shades of their real selves until they are either laced or buttoned up, and that goes too for our cousins, the gloves and the corsets, the girdles, garters, and bras. We all of us literally mould their forms and their desires. Upon that point I think we are all agreed."

There was a chorus of leathering approval.

BIZARRE

but just as the party was about to break up Miss Patent thought that she would like to just point her victory by an illustration of her shining, glistening power.

"I think that all of you might be interested in an experience I once had in the town of Chelting. Most of the action (and what action it was!) took place in a dressing room in the theatre below the stage."

"I belonged to a most elegant Miss who loved all the things we are, no need to enumerate them all over again, you will just have to take my word for it. She was swlegant Elegant Svelte and all that and then some. She always reminded me of a destroyer, and now that I come to think of it that is a very good description of her; trim, navy blue costume or in black, black nylon stockings, and, of course, me on her feet, trim, shining and out for any adventure, skin-tight black kid gloves up to her elbows with three buttons to grip them in to her wrists and neat, sleek black hair. She had a beautiful head and her eyebrows were just black penciled alits. Her mouth also, was a slit hut a very different kind, highly colored and full of deadly menace"

FADS AND FASHIONS

but I run ahead of my story a little.

Well, my mistress Gale was always on the look out for something exciting every time she went out on to the streets shopping or - just going out and she used to have the most amazing luck, which on second thought, was not really amazing as her approach to her victim was always so firm, so self assured and also, in very many cases so original. Kindly remember that when I come to the final scene in the dressing room under the stage."

"This story begins about eleven o'clock one mid-week morning, the time when, in England "elevenses" take place, and the setting was one of those restaurants in a large emporium where later, lunches are served. There is invariably a four piece orchestra which plays "The Merry Widow" and "Tales from the Vienna Woods," and other Strauss melodies in a dulcet and non-intrusive manner, sufficient to add a pleasant breath of music but not loud enough to force one to raise one's voice when talking."

"My mistress elegantly and neatly went

BIZARRE

through the glass swing doors and into the well lighted and pleasantly decorated restaurant where the orchestra was now gently playing. With her shoulders set well back and her trim, neat black head held upright she surveyed the scene - and the people. She always reminded me of a well tailored blackbird! The sleekness of her jet black hair, her quickness of manner and approach and the same all-seeing eye and brain which both seemed to work just those split seconds faster than anyone else. One could never imagine her trying to cope with a difficult situation not made by her. It was invariably she who made the situation and remained in complete control of it, as Wanda, her next victim was to discover. She looked so striking and unbelievably clean and fresh that it was almost as if an English Spring Day had entered the restaurant. Suddenly she had made her move and in quick incisive steps had crossed the lounge leaving a trail of subtle perfume and patent leather behind her. Sometimes I drew back onto her feet with apprehension thinking that this time she had gone too far. But she never had!

My lady this time drew up at a table in a bay window overlooking the street at which there

PADS AND FASHIONS

was one customer, a nice, fair, blue-eyed girl wearing a flowered blue dress with variations of the theme of the flowers scattered around. She was gloved - blue kidded, and her shoes were also blue kid with three inch heels."

"I don't think that she really saw my mistress at first as she was gazing out of the window at the passing show. But when my mistress drew her chair out and sat down opposite her wafting over the table her subtle perfume and aroma of a fresh Spring day she just had to take notice as Gale looked so superbly fit and beautiful and well groomed. She looked up at her with a half-smile just out of perfectly natural friendliness and Gale remarked straight away, "You are left handed!" Wanda glanced at her blue gloved hand the forefinger of which was around the cup handle which she was lifting upwards and smiled, "Yes, isn't it stupid? It's always getting me into trouble, especially on the stage."

"I must here interrupt the conversation to point out once again the perspicacity of my mistress Gale. While she had been pausing by the swing doors she had enumerated every single

customer in her mind and had spotted, with lightning quickness this chance which would give her the opening she required."

"Again, near the finale of this story you will note how Gale by an extraordinary twist of mentality, in one second of time, completely overwhelmed her victim with no preparatory talk or actions at all. I really do not see how anyone in the world could or can stand against her once that lightning like mind has selected her next victim. However, all that is by the way. Let me proceed to tell the story as it happened."

"The Stage!" exclaimed Gale. "How very, very interesting. Are you at the theatre this week?" Wanda agreed that this was so and the two girls talked theatre shop for some time, Gale fascinated her companion and showed perhaps a larger knowledge of the theatre than had she. Eventually, Wanda promised to show Gale round the empty theatre that afternoon. "I'm afraid that you'll find it deadly dull, though, as there won't be a soul there. The staff all leave at lunch time and there's not even a hallkeeper. Yet, strangely enough the

stage door is left unlocked; the stage itself has a few pilot lights and, of course, the dressing room lights are always ready to be switched on; likewise the wide corridor between the rooms; or rather I should say that this corridor light is left permanently on for safety of artists who might come in - like us - in the afternoon."

"Deadly dull," our poor unwitting victim had said. Deadly she herself would find it but not dull, not either of the girls."

"Wanda was on her way to the hairdressers after coffee and after that she wanted to buy another pair of shoes as she had seen a 'perfectly heavenly pair of twinkling patents at a shop down the road.' She always had such difficulty in getting shoes that really fitted her as she took such a small size, three and a half to be exact, and so many sales ladies would try and foist off a four on to her saying that it would be more comfortable or else it was a three saying that her foot was so small that she could easily get it on. This pair was actually a sale and it was undoubtedly the fact that these shoes were so small that put them up for sale in the window."

BIZARRE

"I don't mind telling you now that I know you quite well," said Wanda, "that I'm in rather a fix, I have to have my hair done, that is quite certain, for tonight's show. My mother promised to send me a money order to arrive by to-day and the Post Office people say that it has not come. But if I don't go in and pay for the shoes which I promised to do yesterday when I called in they'll put the shoes back in the window. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, oh dear," she sighed in humorous puzzlement.

"But don't be so absurd, my little Wanda," said my mistress. "Fancy letting a small thing like that puzzle your pretty head. We'll go straight in now and put those shoes on and then there will be no argument as to whom they belong. Come along now, I'll brook no argument."

"Believe me when Gale talked in that tone of voice there was no argument. Wanda just allowed herself to be taken into the shop. The shoes were slipped over her pretty little feet; whoosh, whoosh! Just like that. And there she stood in dazzling patent leather with heels $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches high."

FADS AND FASHIONS

"When they came out in to the street again Wanda was almost embarrassed. "Oh, Gale," she said, "the heels are so high! Are you sure that they are not too high?" Gale made great play, making her hold up her leg behind her and looking down at her victim's high heel. "No, I think that they are just perfect, little Wanda. After all they are exactly the same height as mine and I am taller than you. Anyway you are not to look a gift horse in the heel," she added laughing. Wanda laid her gloved hand on Gale's arm. "Oh no!" she said. "No, I couldn't possibly."

"Wanda!" said Gale mock warningly. "You will do as I say - - won't you?" she said dropping her voice to a purr, "That's right. Now off you go to your hairdresser and I'll meet you outside the theatre at three o'clock."

"Three o'clock."

"Down the street in her new-found pants Wanda tripped merrily along. Obviously she had soon mastered the art of rising two and a half inches in the world."

BIZARRE

"Now where would you like to start first?" said Wanda, "In the auditorium?"

"No, no, no," replied her shortly-to-be seducer, "I've spent too much of my time watching plays. Show me round the backstage it is much more interesting."

"Well, all right then," said Wanda doubtfully, "but I'm afraid you'll be dreadfully disappointed ('I bet I won't,' I thought to myself)," and with that she took her through the stage door and onto the stage. There it was, a great big empty barn with a few fitful lamps to show the obstructions. Wanda pointed out the electrician's board and the perches and all the other paraphernalia which go to make up a stage show. "And that's really about all there is to show," said Wanda. "I told you you'd be disappointed."

"Now here I must again interrupt my story, owing to my own carelessness earlier, in not stating that when the two girls got to know each other better over the coffee cups it had transpired that Wanda was just crazy on men. I don't mean that she threw herself at every one she met.

FADS AND FASHIONS

but those who were presentable evidently enjoyed themselves with her. Now although that paragraph may not seem of any importance it will shortly. Very shortly."

"What about the dressing rooms?" queried Gale. "Those, to me are more interesting than the rest of the set up."

"Oh, those. They're down here. Follow me," And on her high stilts she led the way down a circular staircase at one side of the stage. There was just one light half way down which threw the most beautiful shines of creasing leather on to the one who was every inch moving to her fate. Arriving at the bottom which was not deep she switched on the more powerful lights for the corridor which was very wide and with coconut matting on the floor. Along each side were what might be termed hairdressing cubicles; the men's were at one side of the corridor and at the other the ladies. Wanda led the way along to hers and unlocked it and then switched on the light and stepped back to let Gale go by. And that, I suppose was the most fateful step she ever took in her life, literally and figuratively."

BIZARRE

"It was a pleasant dressing room with a large mirror along one side with bright electric fittings all round it and a make-up table or shelf covered in some bright material with all Wanda's make up things placed out ready. Half way turned to the mirror there was what is called - a half lounge chair I think it is - anyway it is made in nice upholstery with half wings and a soft rounded top on which to rest one's head. Opposite was a hanging cupboard and various other small tables and stools. A very comfortable room it was."

"BUT the thing, or things which took the eye on entering were the photos. There were literally dozens of photo frames all with the pictures of men, on her shelf, they were pinned in the edge of the frame, they occupied every spare inch of each table. Wanda was certainly telling no lie when she said that she was fond of men!"

"Gale looked around the place and probed here and there while Wanda sat down in her chair the better to rest her feet which, she said, were beginning to wilt under the five inch plus strain! The conversation was easy and smooth

FADS AND FASHIONS

but all the time my mistress was planning her every move. The attack was as carefully planned as any general's. Casually she moved around to behind her victim's chair and then just to the right of the back of it so that she could reach any part of Wanda when she wanted to. Leaning her left arm all gloved and ready for the killing on the back of the chair to the left of Wanda's head, she poised her right foot ready to pounce, her right hand in its black cover was simply aching to get to its goal."

"All was now set for the great moment she had planned all day but before we witness the strike let me remind you of what I told you some little time back; that Gale swallowed her opponent whole in one second, and by a sudden switch of mentality allied to bewitching fingerings."

"With left hand ready to drop, with the right hand ready to pounce and with right leg lightly on the ground Gale said:

"You like men, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," was Wanda's reply.

BIZARRE

"But that was as far as she got, for at the word "men" Gale's left hand dropped over the unsuspecting girl's breast and with practised art and experience closed around the sensitive orb. At the same time she swung her right leg over Wanda's outstretched ankle rendering it immobile. Her right hand swooped to her yielding thigh while her thumb completed the surrender."

"Wanda's head fell back helplessly on the back of the chair and her mouth fell open."

"Without pausing Gale pressed over her friend and closed her mouth upon unresisting lips which softened and answered her urgent kisses."

"Removing her leg she placed her shoe along the chair seat so that I could titivate our captive which I did with slow, loving shiny strokes of patent leather."

"Suddenly, Wanda's legs responded to my glidings and her body went taut as a blow. Muffled groans rose in her throat but were lost in the kisses of my mistress. Her arms went up

FADS AND FASHIONS

and around Gale's body; then she slowly relaxed and her legs went limp and her arms fell down weakly, and her finger tips rested on the floor."

"My mistress gently released the lips of the other girl and took me away from the spot where I had done so much to achieve victory. She stepped back and looked down upon Wanda whose head had fallen sideways on the back of the chair, her mouth was half open but her eyes were closed with lovely shadows upon them. My mistress smiled, then turned and walked out of the room, along the passage, up the circular staircase, tap-tapped her way across the stage and out once more on to the street where nothing seemed to have changed."

Only downstairs in a dressing room something had changed, and changed for evermore!

THE END. . .





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